



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Alaska Region
Tongass National
Forest

Sitka Ranger District
204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835
(907) 747-6671

Hydroelectric Power Project for National Marine Fisheries Service's Little Port Walter Marine Research Station Environmental Analysis

Dear Planning Participant:

May 16, 2011

The Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, Sitka Ranger District, is seeking your involvement regarding an application submitted by the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop a hydroelectric facility for generating power for its Little Port Walter Marine Research Station on Baranof Island, Alaska. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the project and request your comments on the proposal as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process. The environmental analysis will provide the responsible official, Forrest Cole, Forest Supervisor of the Tongass National Forest with enough information to make a decision.

Scoping is the first step in public participation for the project planning efforts. The purpose of scoping is to identify potential issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with the proposed project. **WE NEED YOUR HELP** to make sure we consider all the issues and affects that are of concern to you or your communities. Please examine the enclosed information and map, and send us comments that will help us to develop a comprehensive and sound environmental evaluation.

We have provided forms on which to write your comments, or you can use your own format to write, call, or fax us your comments. It is important that your comments identify specific issues to be considered, places within the project area that are important, or suggestions to improve or change the project, including your comments for alternatives. Remember, in order to be most useful to our analysis **COMMENTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY May 30, 2011.**

We look forward to your comments and participation in the process. Your views are important to us.

CAROL A. GOULARTE
District Ranger

Public Scoping

May 2011

The public is invited to provide comments and concerns on the proposed project.

Public Comment Period

Ends June 13, 2011

The public comment period lasts for 30 days from date of this scoping letter.
All comments must be postmarked by June 13, 2011

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

Anticipated by
June 27, 2011

Construction Begins

Anticipated by
October 3, 2011

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Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is for us to be responsive to an application for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands.

Currently, the station is dependent on stand-alone diesel generation and burns roughly 22,000 gallons annually. The underlying need for this action is to develop a means for generating “green” energy and eliminate the transfer, storage and burning of large amounts of diesel.

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Proposed Action

The USDA, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest proposes to authorize the National Marine Fisheries Service to construct, operate, and maintain hydroelectric facilities at Lake Osprey to provide power to the Little Port Walter Research Station on southern Baranof Island. Authorization will occur through the issuance of a special use permit to NMFS for a period of 20 years. The geographical coordinates of the station are approximately 56°23' N latitude and 134°38' W longitude.

Project description

- 1) The project would include a 1,800-foot 16-inch pipeline at Lake Osprey, a hydropower plant in a 20-foot by 20-foot powerhouse, a 4,060-foot 5 kV submarine cable, and a 540-foot buried transmission line near the station.
- 2) The project would use water from Lake Osprey, which has a surface area of 230 acres and an average outflow of 45 cfs down Osprey Creek to a proposed power station on the north shore of Port Walter Bay. The hydroelectric power facility would generate 75 kW of power, with the capacity for expansion to 150 kW if electrical demand increases.
- 3) Construction of the project will include a 20x24' work pad at the lake to allow for a backhoe and pipe welder. Materials will be offloaded from a barge left off shore in the New Port Walter Bay. Materials and equipment will be flown to the lake work pad by helicopter.

The proposed project would install a screened intake structure about 300 feet into Lake Osprey at a depth of about -20 feet to prevent interference from ice and debris. A high density polyethylene (HDPE) intake pipe would carry water to the outlet where water from the lake flows down Osprey Creek. A dam to maintain the lake's present water level at elevation 190.5 MSL datum would be constructed.

A penstock would be constructed to follow the creek down to the power station. The penstock would be supported in some segments of its length on pipe hangers affixed to the rock walls of the creek bed. Other segments of the pipe's length would be affixed to ground-supported treated timbers. Expansion joints will accommodate thermal and differential movement of the support structures. Anchor blocks would also be used to limit movement of the penstock.

A pre-engineered steel building would be constructed to house the generator and its controls on the north shore of Port Walter. The building, approximately 32 feet wide x 40 feet long x 12 feet high with a sloping roof, would be built on a reinforced concrete foundation, with the floor level of the building at elevation 18.0 MLLW, above the maximum tailwater elevation at 15.0 MLLW. The power station will have two discharge tailraces, which will be concrete-lined over a portion of their length and excavated in rock.

A switchyard, adjacent to the powerhouse and enclosed by chain-link fencing, would allow the generator voltage of 440 volts to be stepped up to 4,160 volts and transmitted by submarine cable to the south shore of Port Walter. The submarine cable will be either a 5 kV shielded cable or a 15 kV shielded cable. The cable will include a fiber optic communication cable and will be protected in the tidal zone in a pipe casing buried in a trench.

Placement of the cable could follow a more direct route that requires about 3,900 feet of cable at a depth of about 110 fathoms or a less direct route with milder slope transitions of about 4,400 feet at a depth of about 90 fathoms. An even longer route could reduce the cable depth to about 55 fathoms. Concrete anchors will stabilize the cable against tidal currents.

The submarine cable will terminate at the south shore switchyard to the existing diesel generating station at the research facility. There another disconnect switch and transfer switch will transfer the power to the station's existing electrical system.

Relationship to the Forest Plan

All management decisions on the Tongass National Forest must be consistent with the 2008 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

The existing research facility is located in a Remote Recreation Land Use Designation (LUD), which provides extensive, unmodified natural settings for primitive types of recreation and tourism. A Forest Plan amendment is needed to adjust the LUD to allow for the existing and new development.

Your Comments—Please Participate!

Scoping is a process by which the public and other agencies may take an active role in project development. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the Proposed Action, we invite you comments. **Comments should be as specific as possible.** YOUR COMMENTS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY: June 13, 2011

Please send your comments to:

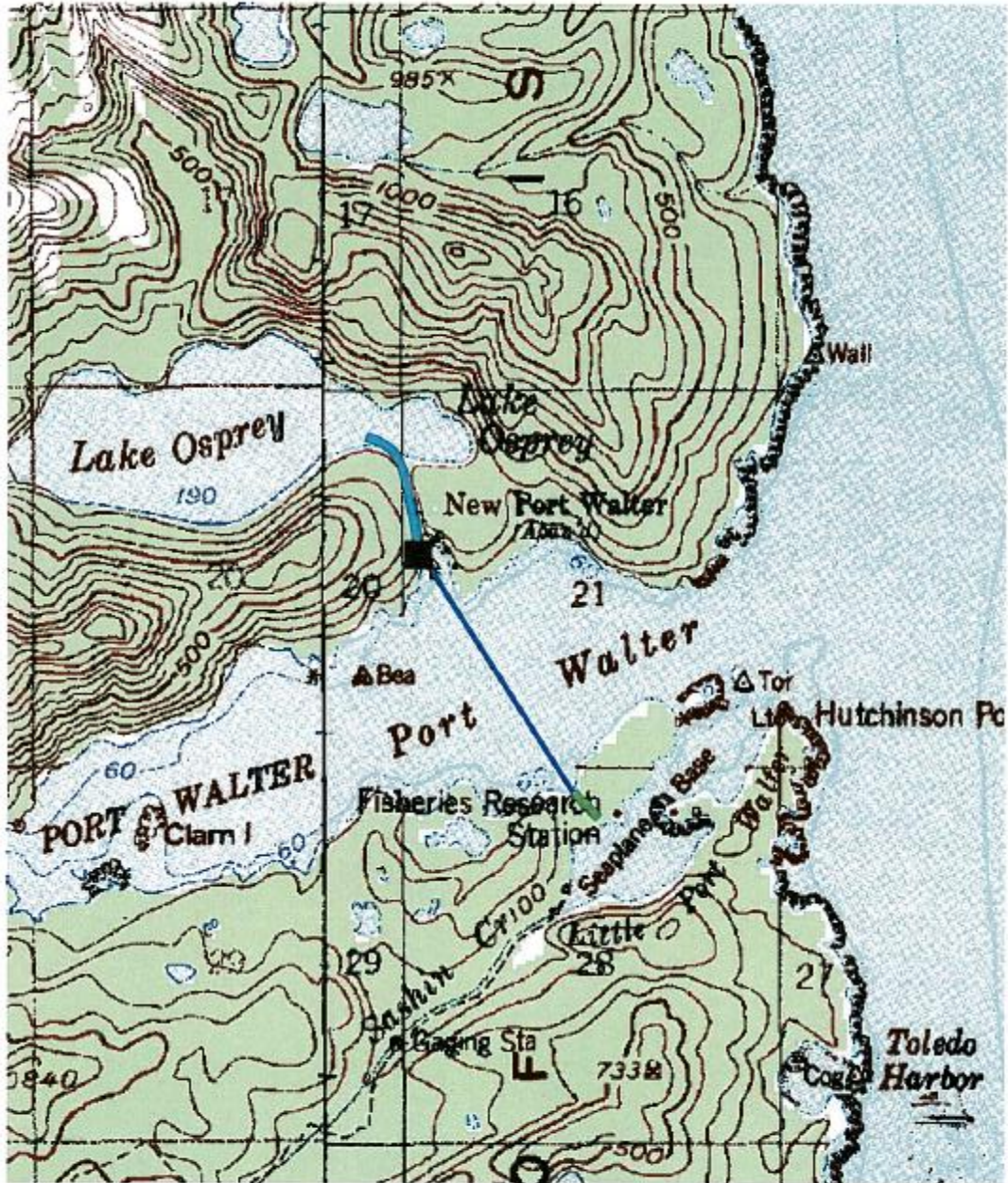
Clay R. Davis
Sitka Ranger District,
204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835,

FAX: 907-747-4253.

Telephone: 907-747-4225

Email: clayrdavis@fs.fed.us

Location of Proposed
Action



**Here are my scoping comments for the NMFS Little
Port Walter Marine Research Station Hydroelectric
Power Project Environmental Analysis:
Due June 13, 2011**

- ✓ If you have no comments at this time, but wish to remain on the mailing list, please return this form with your name and address legibly filled out.
- ✓ IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU AT THIS TIME, YOUR NAME MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PROJECT MAILING LIST.

Your Signature:

Print Your Name and Address:

Mail or hand-deliver comments to:

Clay R. Davis

Sitka Ranger District

Attn: project name

204 Siginaka Way

Sitka, AK 99835

Telephone: (907) 747-4225

FAX: (907) 747-4253

email: clayrdavis@fs.fed.us

Fold along line, staple, stamp, and mail

FROM:

(return address required)

**Place
Stamp
Here**

TO: Clay R. Davis
Sitka Ranger District
Attn: Little Port Walter
Hydroelectric Project
Environmental Analysis
204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835

Please Participate!

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the Proposed Action, comments during scoping should be as specific as possible.

STAY IN TOUCH

STAY INVOLVED

National Marine Fisheries Service's Little Port Walter Research Station Hydroelectric Facility Environmental Analysis check project name

PROPOSED PROJECT:

Replace existing diesel-fueled electric power generator of the Little Port Walter Marine Research Station with facilities for generating hydroelectric power. *Details inside*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Clay R. Davis
Sitka Ranger District
204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835
Telephone (907) 747-4225
email: clayrdavis@fs.fed.us

COMMENTS DUE: June 13, 2011



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